

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Feasibility Study
Delta Protection Commission
Public Meeting #2
Rio Vista – D.H. White Elementary School
Wednesday October 6th, 2010
6:30 pm to 9:00 pm

Meeting Summary

Attendees:

Lynne Hansen - *Resident*
Norman Richardson – *Rio Vista Planning Commissioner*
Carol Splain – *Educator*
Kathryn Marshall – *Historian*
Randall McClaine – *Boyscout Master*
Tina McBride – *Resident*
Valerie Jensen – *Resident*
Grant Jensen – *Landscape Architect*
Mary McTaggart – *North Delta C.A.R.E.S, Lisbon District Resident*
Terry and Jane Alchorn – *Courtland Resident*
John Marshall – *Consultant*
Vince Guise – *Contra Costa County Department of Agriculture*
Carolyn Schimandle – *California State Parks*
Katie Patterson – *San Joaquin Farm Bureau*
Margit Aramburu – *University of the Pacific*
Robert Burns – *Trilogy*
Carol Ann Frazer
Phil Pezzaglia – *Rio Vista Resident*
Susanna Schlendorf – *District Director Assemblymember Buchanan*
Mark McTeer – *Rio Vista Planning Commission*
Gene W. Vick – *Delta Natural History Association*
Karen Medders – *North Delta C.A.R.E.S.*
Barbary Daly – *Delta Landowner*
Richard Brann
Jay Correia – *California Office of Historic Preservation*
Connie Boulware – *Rio Vista Airport Advisory Committee, Rio Vista Army Base Steering Committee*
Julia Cox – *California State Parks*
Lisa Kirk – *Business Owner, Locke*
Jan Vick – *Mayor of Rio Vista*

Staff:

Michael Machado– *Delta Protection Commission Executive Director*
Marc Ceccarelli – *Delta Protection Commission Staff*
William Eisenstein – *Consultant*
Alex Westhoff – *Consultant*

Agenda:

- 1) Introductions
- 2) Context of NHA process
- 3) Benefits of NHA
- 4) Breakout groups
- 5) Work with Themes and Resources
- 6) Report from Groups
- 7) Closing

Summary Notes:

Introduction/Context/Benefits

William Eisenstein introduced the consulting team consisting of himself and Alex Westhoff; Michael Machado, Executive Director of the Delta Protection Commission (DPC); and Jan Vick, Mayor of Rio Vista.

William Eisenstein explained that this is the second meeting of the feasibility study process for a National Heritage Area (NHA) in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The objective of this meeting is to start thinking about aspects of the Delta's heritage and history that could be incorporated into 'themes' for a Delta NHA, and to identify resources that support those themes.

A meeting attendee asked if this approach means that the NHA is a done deal for the Delta? Machado responded by stating that it is not a done deal at this point. He explained that the DPC is mandated to conduct this feasibility study as a result of state legislation (SBX7-1).

Machado explained a bit about what an NHA is. It is a designation that acknowledges a place of national stature and historical significance. Common results of an NHA include interpretive signage, more visibility to a region and an increase in tourism and revenues gained from hotels, services, etc. Most of the other NHAs are in the eastern part of the U.S. and there are currently none in California. Upon getting the designation, the next step would be to write an NHA management plan which needs to be approved by the Secretary of the Interior. If the plan is approved then the NHA is eligible for seed money. Using the federal seed money, there is usually a 1:8 ratio of funds leveraged from other sources.

Machado explained that Dianne Feinstein, with Barbara Boxer, recently introduced legislation into the Senate for the Delta to receive NHA designation. Congressman John Garamendi, with original co-sponsors Reps. George Miller, Doris Matsui, Jerry McNerney, and Mike Thompson introduced companion legislation into the House of Representatives. The legislation would directly designate the Delta as an NHA, bypassing the feasibility study process, and would designate the DPC as the management entity who

would therefore be required to write a management plan. This legislation is a result of discussions with the Delta five county supervisors and includes opt-out provisions for local property owners who are not interested in being involved. Machado made the point that regardless of whether or not this legislation passes, tonight's meeting is still crucial to the success of the NHA as the information can be incorporated into either the feasibility study or the management plan. Public meetings such as this one provide a forum for stakeholder driven discussions on the NHA which will feed directly into its management. This is an opportunity to ensure a bottoms up approach to development of the NHA with a local unit of government serving as the creator of a management plan. Tonight's meeting will be an opportunity for local stakeholders to discuss what is in the Delta of historical significance that should be recognized in an NHA. This could include components such as agriculture, legacy towns, reclamation, etc. Consultants will gather this information and pass it along to the DPC to include in planning for the NHA.

Eisenstein said a few more words about what a NHA is, using the handout with the Powerpoint slides that had been presented at public meeting #1. An NHA is completely different from a National Park. NHAs can be economic enhancement tools that do not involve federal ownership of land, federal land use control, eminent domain or regulatory consequences. Essentially a NHA is a regional branding tool that can help create identity for an area. A benefit of a NHA in the Delta would be to turn people's heads and acknowledge the Delta as a place of national significance. An increase in visitors would result in more people spending money in local communities. Seed money could be used for projects that are locally controlled. Decision making is driven by a management entity who engage local community groups in the management plan process at the grassroots level. Projects could include historic preservation, recreational trail development, ecological restoration, and more.

A meeting attendee asked that because Feinstein has designated the DPC as the management entity in her legislation, what is the relationship between locals and the DPC? Machado responded that the DPC has representation from the five Delta counties, city council members, local reclamation districts and five state agencies. Public comments can be brought directly to the DPC or to the local affiliated representatives individually. Representatives from the five delta counties also meet as a coalition and the Chairman of the DPC sits on the Delta Stewardship Council as a voting member.

A meeting attendee asked what effects the NHA designation would have on properties already listed on a historical register. Machado responded by stating that the NHA would not bring about further restrictions on property rights, and also reiterated that property owners could opt out of being included in the NHA. The same attendee asked if money for historic preservation projects would stem from NHA designation and Machado stated that this could likely happen.

A meeting attendee commented that the Delta is not widely publicized as the Delta being a 'destination.' Would NHA status change this? Eisenstein stated that yes, likely acquiring NHA status would help give the Delta more visibility as a destination and could lead to an increase in funds for promoting it as a destination.

A meeting attendee asked how this process is connected to the Bay Delta Conservation Plan? Machado stated that the two processes are not connected.

A meeting attendee asked how long it would take to develop the management plan? Machado responded that it would take between two to five years from development to approval.

Breakout Groups

Eisenstein introduced the main exercise of the evening. He explained what is meant by an NHA interpretive theme, using examples from other NHAs that were outlined on a handout. He stated that groups should identify themes, perhaps four or five. Once themes are identified, then groups should record resources that support these themes. Resources could include places that visitors to the Delta would be able to access and visit to understand about important aspects of the Delta's history. Using a different color pen for each of the themes, groups should mark all the resources that support these themes on the large maps of the Delta. Participants were given packets with excerpts from the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area feasibility study as a guide which consisted of a series of maps, in which each map was reflective of a different heritage area theme, and the supportive resources were clearly marked on the maps. Participants were also given a handout which includes existing state and federal designated historical resources in the Delta, for informational purposes only.

A meeting attendee asked about incorporating themes and resources related to the natural settings of the Delta as the definition of an NHA discusses natural landscapes that have been influenced by human settlement. Eisenstein stated that while NHAs do not exclusively celebrate the natural landscape of an area, they can certainly acknowledge it as an important component.

A meeting attendee stated that agriculture would likely be a dominant theme of a Delta NHA. If we designate agricultural areas, such as the Clarksburg region, how can we stop the Bay Delta Conservation Plan from doing their projects in those regions? Machado responded by stating that the voice coming out of this process will be extremely important in drawing attention to local concerns.

Work with Themes and Resources

Participants then broke into small groups. A total of five groups formed, with five or six participants per group. They worked on the exercise for about 45 minutes.

Report from Groups

One spokesperson from each group was designated to report back to the larger group. The following are lists of themes and resources designated by each group.

Group 1

Themes and Affiliated Resources:

1) *Battle Over Who Controls Resources (Water)*

- a. *Newton Boothe Home*
- b. *Clifton-Court Forebay*
- c. *Delta Cross Channel*
- d. *Delta Mendota Canal*

2) *Rivers Create Community*

- a. *Delta Towns; Stockton, Rio Vista, Locke, etc.*
- b. *Railroad Transportation, Ferries, Steamships, Paddle Wheelers, Bridges, San Jose – Sacramento Road (Pony Express)*
- c. *Rivers and Levees*

3) *Agricultural Adaptation/Technology Use*

- a. *Benjamin Holt Caterpillar Tractor*
- b. *John Horner at John Marsh Landing*
- c. *Asparagus Factory*

4) *Pre-gold rush/immigration patterns/changing land*

- a. *New Hope*
- b. *Caswell Memorial State Park*
- c. *Chinese railroad*
- d. *Netherlands dikes*
- e. *Japanese rice*
- f. *McFarland Ranch*

5) *Native American Population Battles/Strategies for Survival*

- a. *Locke Mounds (River Meadows)*
- b. *Upper I-5 corridor*
- c. *Stanislaus and Jose Jesus*

6) *Geology*

- a. *Everywhere*

Group 2

Themes and Affiliated Resources:

1) *Reclaiming a Tule Marsh*

- a. *Dutra Musuem*
- b. *Suisun Marsh*
- c. *Delta Meadows*
- d. *Delta Ecotours*
- e. *Isenberg Crane Preserve*
- f. *Cosumnes River Preserve*
- g. *Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge*
- h. *Grizzly Island*

- i. *Franks Tract*
- 2) *Fun on/in the Water***
 - a. *Delta Loop*
 - b. *Delta Channels*
 - c. *Antioch Dunes*
- 3) *Agricultural Diversity Over Time***
 - a. *Old Sugar Mill*
 - b. *Courtland Pear District*
 - c. *San Joaquin Historical Museum*
 - d. *The River Mill*
 - e. *Port Costa (Benicia) – the Wheat Capital of the World in the 1800's*
 - f. *Heidrick Ag History Center*
 - g. *Grand Island Mansion*
- 4) *The World Pours in – and Leaves its Mark***
 - a. *Locke*
 - b. *John Marsh Home*
 - c. *Port Chicago*
 - d. *Camp Stoneman*
 - e. *Delta Bridges*
- 5) *Water Wars***
 - a. *Tracy Pumps*
- 6) *Others***
 - a. *Fertile soils/peat*
 - b. *Delta ferries/bridges*
 - c. *Historic ferry just east of Antioch power plant*
 - d. *Byron Hot Springs – Natural Area, history with early film stars and World War II history*

Group 3

Themes and Affiliated Resources:

1) *Agriculture*

- a. *Courtland Pear Festival*
- b. *Agricultural Machinery (Beat Harvester, Tomato Harvester)*
- c. *John Horner (Steamship)*
- d. *Hastings Adobe*
- e. *Miwok Village*
- f. *Rio Vista Museum*
- g. *New Hope (Mormon Colony from Ship Brooklyn)*

2) *Transportation*

- a. *John Horner (Steamship)*
- b. *Bridges*
- c. *Ferries*

3) *Geography*

- a. *Waterways*
- b. *Historic Towns (including Vorden, Paintersville, Emmaton, New Hope)*
- c. *Topography*

4) Dredging

- a. Dutra Museum

5) Historical Events

- a. Courtland Pear Festival
- b. Rio Vista Bass Festival
- c. Holy Ghost Festival
- d. Jack London in Walnut Grove and other famous writers
- e. History of Motion Pictures: Hotel Rio Vista, John Wayne Movie, St. Joseph's/St. Gertrude

Group 4

Themes and Affiliated Resources:

1) Arkansas Act of 1860 (Swamp and Overflow Lands)

- a. Sacramento and San Joaquin River Channels

2) Indigenous Flora and Fauna Prior to 1846

- a. Land throughout the Delta

3) Agricultural Production as the Driving Force for Technological Innovation and Advancement

- a. Farmland throughout the Delta

4) Abundance of Pristine Waterways Provide Unlimited Recreational Opportunities for all Californians, Regardless of Socio-economic Circumstances

- a. Waterways throughout the Delta

5) Celebrity magnet: films, TV, etc. Immediate proximity to urban, rural and diverse areas of California

- a. Numerous spots throughout the Delta

Group 5

Themes and Affiliated Resources:

1) Reclamation

- a. Locke (Chinese Labor)
- b. Rio Vista Army Base
- c. Dutra Museum
- d. Rio Vista Museum
- e. Dredging Equipment

2) Agriculture/Preservation/History

- a. Isleton Grainery on Highway 160
- b. Sherman Island
- c. Equipment Inventions
- d. Caterpillar/Blackwelder

3) Transportation

- a. Steamboat Stops along the Sacramento River
- b. Pony Express
- c. Bridges
- d. Ferries

4) Recreation/Vacation

- a. Marinas

- b. *Fishing*
 - c. *Sailing*
 - d. *Boating*
 - e. *Camping*
- 5) ***Natural History***

Closing

William Eisenstein wrapped up the discussion and stated that a meeting summary would be produced and posted on the DPC website (<http://www.delta.ca.gov/heritage.htm>).

Michael Machado thanked everyone for participating. He asked how many people had learned something new at this workshop and the majority of the audience members raised their hands in response. He stated that this workshop showed how special the Delta is, and this project will help with sustaining the Delta economically, selling ourselves as a place and retaining generations to come.

A meeting attendee asked about three questions that had been posed at Public Meeting #1 which consultants agreed to do follow up research on. Who was on Delta-as-place workgroup that recommended this project to Blue Ribbon Task Force? Are any existing NHAs self-supporting? Are existing NHAs in regions which have natural resource conflicts like the Delta and if so, has acquiring NHA status had any affect on these issues? William Eisenstein responded by stating that answers to these questions have been researched and will be distributed shortly.

A meeting attendee asked if this project was developed as an answer to the problems in the Delta? Machado responded by stating that there are processes in the Delta that are taking place which dismiss it as a region of significance. This is a way to gain visibility to the people, history and habitat of the Delta that make it a unique place.

A meeting attendee asked what is meant by the Delta as an evolving place? Machado responded that the Delta is continuously evolving. Less than 200 years ago it was a system of marshlands and today it is a working landscape. Yet someone can be in a duckblind in the Delta surrounded by birds, yet still be able to view urban areas on all sides, less than two hours away. This is an opportunity for locals to have a voice to retain unique aspects that may be overlooked in other processes, to keep 'Delta-as-place' and not to lose the lifestyle that locals have grown up with and want to see passed on.